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Letter dated 22 May 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the statement of the National Security Council of Georgia, of 19 May 2003, on the implementation of the agreements reached at the Sochi meeting of 6 and 7 March 2003, between the Presidents of Georgia and the Russian Federation in the context of the settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Revaz **Adamia**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 22 May 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Russian]

Statement by the National Security Council of Georgia

The National Security Council of Georgia met on 16 May of this year and considered, together with other matters, the question of the implementation of the agreements reached at the meeting of the Presidents of Georgia and the Russian Federation held in Sochi on 6 and 7 March 2003.

As is well known, at the Sochi meeting, the Presidents laid down in connection with the problem of Abkhazia specific tasks, whose implementation will promote a political settlement of the conflict and help to carry out of the decisions adopted on 18 and 19 February 2003 in Geneva by the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General.

Among the agreements reached in Sochi, the issues of the restoration of railway communication between Georgia and the Russian Federation and, in parallel, the organized and dignified return of refugees and forcibly displaced persons under safe conditions to their places of residence are most important. The implementation of these agreements can be viewed as an important practical step towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia.

At the same time, the National Security Council of Georgia deems it necessary to express its concern in connection with a trend that has come about since the meeting in question. This relates, in particular, to attempts to remove separate parts from the entire set of the Sochi agreements, specifically, the restoration of railway communication between Georgia and the Russian Federation, in order not to fulfil or to fulfil only partially the agreement on the parallel return of the refugees and forcibly displaced persons.

The National Security Council of Georgia states with full responsibility that, in spite of the importance of restoring railway communication, it is impossible to carry out this idea in isolation — the railway must be rehabilitated only in parallel with the other processes of settling the conflict.

Furthermore, for the railway line to function, it is certainly necessary to ensure the appropriate security conditions. In this regard, decisive importance is attached precisely to the start of the process of the return of the expelled and forcibly displaced persons. The return of the expelled persons will also help to provide the railway infrastructure with qualified personnel.

Taking all this into account, the Presidents made a statement which clearly indicates the link between the processes of the restoration of railway communication and the return of the forcibly displaced persons.

The recent increasingly frequent visits by high ranking representatives of the authorities of the Russian Federation and statements that are openly directed against the unity and territorial integrity of the Georgian State have also given rise to concern. Such actions can only lead to a worsening of Georgian-Russian relations

and slow down the process of finding a political solution to the conflict in Abkhazia, which does not meet the interests of either Georgia or the Russian Federation.

For the members of the National Security Council of Georgia, an interpretation in any form of the agreements reached in Sochi and only their partial "selective" implementation are totally unacceptable. Any step to restore railway communication taken on a unilateral basis, without agreement with the Georgian side and before the start of the process of the organized and safe return of the expelled population is illegal and directed against the agreement by the Presidents. In the case in question, the National Security Council of Georgia reserves the right to demand appropriate explanations and to take adequate measures.